IN THE CLAIMS

1.   (Currently amended) An information distribution system for use in a system in which a user device is in communication with a plurality of provider systems including at least first and second provider systems, each provider system being operable to process a transaction initiated by the user device, each transaction comprising a provision of information <u>to a provider system</u> by the user device, ~~the information provided for a transaction with the first provider system comprising a first component of information which is also useful for a transaction with the second provider system,~~ the information distribution system comprising:

an interface which receives the information provided by the user device;

a database, in communication with the interface, in which the received information is stored; and

an information manager in communication with the database and the plurality of provider systems which is operable to<u>:</u>

<u>identify components of information usable by the first provider system or by the second provider system in performing a transaction;</u>

<u>determine which of the components of information are related;</u>

<u>upon determining that certain of the components of information are related, group the related components of information into checkout objects;</u>

<u>evaluate the checkout objects to determine a first set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to only the first provider system, a second set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to only the second provider system, and a third set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to both the first provider system and the second provider system; and</u>

<u>transmit the first set of checkout objects to the first provider system, the second set of checkout objects to the second provider system, and the third set of checkout objects to the first provider system and the second provider system</u> ~~identify the first component of information from among the information provided by the user device and provide the first component of information to the first and second provider systems.~~

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2. (Previously Presented) The information distribution system according to claim 1, wherein the interface is a network interface coupled to a network including one or more clients.

3. (Previously Presented) The information distribution system according to claim 1, wherein the database is a relational database (RDBMS).

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) The information distribution system according to claim 1, wherein <u>at least one of</u> the ~~first~~ component<u>s</u> of information comprises a plurality of data fields provided by the user device.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ <u>In a system in which a user device is in communication with a plurality of provider systems including at least first and second provider systems, each provider system being operable to process a transaction initiated by the user device, each transaction comprising a provision of information by the user device,</u> ~~the information provided for a transaction with the first provider system comprising a first component of information which is also useful for a transaction with the second provider system,~~ a method for sharing information among provider systems, comprising <u>acts of</u>:

  (A) receiving the information provided by the user device;

  (B) storing the information;

  (C) <u>identifying components of information usable by the first provider system or by the second provider system in performing a transaction;</u> ~~identifying the first component of information from among the information provided by the user device; and~~

  (D) <u>determining which of the components of information are related;</u> ~~providing the first component of information to both the first and second provider systems~~

  <u>(E) upon determining that certain of the components of information are related, grouping the related components of information into checkout objects;</u>

(F) evaluating the checkout objects to determine a first set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to only the first provider system, a second set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to only the second provider system, and a third set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to both the first provider system and the second provider system; and

(G) transmitting the first set of checkout objects to the first provider system, the second set of checkout objects to the second provider system, and the third set of checkout objects to the first provider system and the second provider system.

7.   (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 6, wherein the act (A) further comprises receiving the information over a communication network.

8.   (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 6, wherein the act (B) further includes storing the information in a database.

9.   (Cancelled)

10.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 6, wherein at least one of the first components of information comprises a plurality of data fields provided by the user device.

11.   (Withdrawn) A method for creating an online checkout process to enable a user to order from among a plurality of providers, comprising the steps of: assembling a set of checkout questions from the plurality of providers; identifying related checkout questions and assigning each set of related checkout questions to a unique checkout object; determining common checkout objects from providers of a like product or service; assigning the common checkout objects to the like product or service; assigning each non-common checkout object to a specific provider with which it is associated; and assembling said checkout process comprising checkout questions, wherein the user is required to complete each question associated with a common object only once when ordering from any provider that offers the like product or service.

12.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 11 further including the step of assigning at least one field to each object.

13.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 12 further including the step of assigning at least one attribute to each field, the attribute comprising at least one of font, font color, font size, bold, italics, underline and sequence.

14.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 11 wherein the step of determining common checkout objects includes concluding that a checkout object is common to first and second providers if each of the first and second providers require a question included in the object.

15.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 11 wherein the providers of the like product or service are those that provide a newspaper product or service.

16.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 11 wherein related checkout questions are checkout questions having similar characteristics.

17.   (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 11 further including the step, before the step of identifying related checkout questions, of removing from consideration during the identifying step all unique questions.

18.   (Withdrawn) An online system enabling transactions between a user and one or more of a plurality of providers, comprising: a database that stores objects, each object comprising a unique checkout question or a related set of checkout questions from said plurality of providers, wherein objects that are common to a plurality of providers of a like product or service are assigned to that product or service such that each checkout question associated with a common object is asked of the user only once regardless of a number of providers of the like product or service with which the user may wish to enter into a transaction; an interface for receiving information from the user in response to said questions; and said database further storing said information and providing said information

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to said one or more of the plurality of providers.

19.   (Withdrawn) The system according to claim 18, wherein said database is a relational database (RDBMS).

20.   (Withdrawn) The system according to claim 18, wherein the interface is a network interface coupled to a network including said one or more users and said plurality of providers.

21.   (Withdrawn) An online system for assisting users engaged in a residence move in carrying out transactions with one or more of a plurality of providers, comprising: a database that stores objects, each object comprising a unique checkout question or a related set of checkout questions from said plurality of providers, wherein objects that are common to a plurality of providers of a like product or service are assigned to that product or service such that each checkout question associated with a common object is asked of the user only once regardless of a number of providers of the like product or service with which the user may wish to enter into a transaction; an interface for receiving information from the user in response to said questions; and said database further storing said information and providing said information to said one or more of the plurality of providers.

22.   (Withdrawn) The system according to claim 21, wherein said database is a relational database (RDBMS).

23.   (Withdrawn) The system according to claim 21, wherein the interface is a network interface coupled to a network including said one or more users and said plurality of providers.

24.   (Withdrawn) The system according to claim 21, wherein the like product or service includes a newspaper product or service.

~~11~~ 25. (Currently Amended) At least one computer-readable medium having instructions encoded thereon, which instructions, when executed in a system in which a user device is in communication with a plurality of provider systems including at least first and second provider systems, each provider system being operable to process a transaction initiated by the user device, each transaction comprising a provision of information by the user device, ~~the information provided for a transaction with the first provider system comprising a first component of information which is also useful for a transaction with the second provider system,~~ a method for sharing information among provider systems, perform a method comprising <u>acts of</u>:

    (A) receiving the information provided by the user device;

    (B) storing the information;

    (C) <u>identifying components of information usable by the first provider system or by the second provider system in performing a transaction;</u> ~~identifying the first component of information from among the information provided by the user device; and~~

    (D) <u>determining which of the components of information are related;</u> ~~providing the first component of information to both the first and second provider systems~~

    <u>(E) upon determining that certain of the components of information are related, grouping the related components of information into checkout objects;</u>

    <u>(F) evaluating the checkout objects to determine a first set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to only the first provider system, a second set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to only the second provider system, and a third set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to both the first provider system and the second provider system; and</u>

    <u>(G) transmitting the first set of checkout objects to the first provider system, the second set of checkout objects to the second provider system, and the third set of checkout objects to the first provider system and the second provider system.</u>

~~12~~ 26. (Currently Amended) The at least one computer-readable medium according to claim ~~11~~ 25, wherein the act (A) further comprises receiving the information over a communication network.

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~~13~~ 27. (Currently Amended) The at least one computer-readable medium according to claim ~~11~~ 25, wherein the act (B) further includes storing the information in a database.

~~14~~ 28. (Currently Amended) The at least one computer-readable medium according to claim ~~11~~ 25, wherein the act (C) further comprises identifying the first component of information based upon a mapping between components of the received information and components expected by the first and second provider systems.

~~15~~ 29. (Currently Amended) The at least one computer-readable medium according to claim ~~11~~ 25, wherein the first component of information comprises a plurality of data fields provided by the user device.

~~16~~ 30. (Currently amended) The at least one computer-readable medium of claim ~~11~~ 25, wherein the system further comprises a third provider system, <u>the act (C) further comprises identifying components of information usable by the first provider system or by the third provider system in performing a transaction, the act (D) further comprises determining which of the components of information usable by the first provider system and which of the components of information usable by the third provider systems are related, the act (E) further comprises, upon determining in the act (D) that components of information usable by the first provider system or the third provider systems are related, grouping the related components of information into checkout objects, the act (F) further comprises evaluating the checkout objects to determine a first set of checkout objects which should be transmitted to only the first provider system, a fourth set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to only the third provider system, and a fifth set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to both the first provider system and the third provider system, and the act (G) further comprises transmitting the first set of checkout objects to the first provider system, the fourth set of checkout objects to the third provider system, and the fifth set of checkout objects to the first provider system and the third provider system.</u> ~~the information provided by the user device further comprises a second component of information which is useful for a transaction with the first and third provider systems, the act (C) further comprises identifying the second component of~~

~~information from among the information provided by the user device, and the act (D) further comprises providing the second component of information to the first and third provider systems.~~

~~17~~ 31. (Currently Amended) The at least one computer-readable medium of claim ~~11~~ 25, wherein the act (B) further comprises storing a plurality of attributes for each of the ~~first~~ components of information, the plurality of attributes including first and second attributes, the first attribute defining a format for providing ~~the first~~ components of information to the first provider system, the second attribute defining a format for providing the ~~first~~ components of information to the second provider system, and wherein the act ~~(D)~~ (G) further comprises ~~providing~~ transmitting ~~the first~~ components of information to the first provider system as defined by the first attribute and to the second provider system as defined by the second attribute.

~~18~~ 32. (Currently Amended) The information distribution system of claim 1, wherein the system further comprises a third provider system, and wherein the information manager is further operable to:

    identify components of information usable by the first provider system or by the third provider system in performing a transaction;

    determine which of the components of information usable by the first provider system and which of the components of information usable by the third provider systems are related;

    upon determining that components of information usable by the first provider system or the third provider systems are related, group the related components of information into checkout objects;

    compare the checkout objects to determine a first set of checkout objects which should be transmitted to only the first provider system, a fourth set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to only the third provider system, and a fifth set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to both the first provider system and the third provider system; and

    transmit the first set of checkout objects to the first provider system, the fourth set of checkout objects to the third provider system, and the fifth set of checkout objects to the first provider system and the third provider system. ~~the information provided by the user device further~~

~~comprises a second component of information which is useful for a transaction with the first and third provider systems, and the information manager is further operable to identify the second component of information from among the information provided by the user device and provide the second component of information to the first and third provider systems.~~

~~19~~ 33. (Currently Amended) The information distribution system of claim 1, wherein the database stores a plurality of attributes for <u>each of</u> the ~~first~~ component<u>s</u> of information, the plurality of attributes including first and second attributes, the first attribute defining a format for providing ~~the first~~ component<u>s</u> of information to the first provider system, the second attribute defining a format for providing ~~the first~~ component<u>s</u> of information to the second provider system, and wherein the information manager is further operable to ~~provide~~ <u>transmit</u> ~~the first~~ component<u>s</u> of information to the first provider system as defined by the first attribute and to the second provider system as defined by the second attribute.

~~20~~ 34. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the system further comprises a third provider system, <u>the act (C) further comprises identifying components of information usable by the first provider system or by the third provider system in performing a transaction, the act (D) further comprises determining which of the components of information usable by the first provider system and which of the components of information usable by the third provider systems are related, the act (E) further comprises, upon determining in the act (D) that components of information usable by the first provider system or the third provider systems are related, grouping the related components of information into checkout objects, the act (F) further comprises comparing the checkout objects to determine a first set of checkout objects which should be transmitted to only the first provider system, a fourth set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to only the third provider system, and a fifth set of checkout objects that should be transmitted to both the first provider system and the third provider system, and the act (G) further comprises transmitting the first set of checkout objects to the first provider system, the fourth set of checkout objects to the third provider system, and the fifth set of checkout objects to the first provider system and the third provider system.</u> ~~the information provided by the user device further comprises a second component of information~~

~~which is useful for a transaction with the first and third provider systems, the act (C) further~~
~~comprises identifying the second component of information from among the information provided~~
~~by the user device, and the act (D) further comprises providing the second component of~~
~~information to the first and third provider systems.~~

~~21~~ 35. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the act (B) further comprises storing a
plurality of attributes for each of the ~~first~~ component<u>s</u> of information, the plurality of attributes
includes first and second attributes, the first attribute defines a format for providing ~~the first~~
component<u>s</u> of information to the first provider system, the second attribute defines a format for
providing ~~the first~~ component<u>s</u> of information to the second provider system, and wherein the act
~~(D)~~ <u>(G)</u> further comprises ~~providing~~ <u>transmitting</u> ~~the first~~ component<u>s</u> of information to the first
provider system as defined by the first attribute and to the second provider system as defined by the
second attribute.